and tried to help political prisoners. My companions smuggled my manuscript out to them, asking them to try to publish it. Later the story appeared in one of the leading Russian magazines, *Vestnik Evropy*, and was reprinted in book form in several languages. It was signed by the letter "S," which remained my pen name for many years. Although the article was not very well written, it attracted public attention.

The local assistant court attorney, himself a member of the Political Red Cross, was among the first to read the manuscript. He suggested to Nadya that he spare me the return to Ekaterinoslav by keeping me indefinitely in the Novgorod prison. Nadya liked the idea but doubted whether I would accept it. The president of the Red Cross, a gentle elderly lady, came to see me. All I had to do, she said, was to ask the superintendent to postpone my transfer to Ekaterinoslav for health reasons. The superintendent would send the petition to the court attorney. The latter would ask for my papers for examination. The papers would be sent to his assistant, who usually handled such questions, and he would simply pigeonhole them. In the absence of the reply to my petition, I would serve the rest of my four years of forced labor in this peaceful, quiet place, with books and an opportunity to write.

This friendly proposal called for at least a polite reply, but it sounded to me like an invitation to desert my companions in the Ekaterinoslav Castle. Taking my hands into her frail ones, the old lady asked timidly, "You will write to the superintendent?" I assured her I would. The same day I wrote to the superintendent that the affair for which I had been brought to Novgorod was terminated and asked for my return to Ekaterinoslav.

The journey back was uneventful. In the Moscow deportation prison, the assistant superintendent noticed that, contrary to regulation, I had no chains. "Where are your irons?" he asked. I answered that I did not know. Suspecting I had rid myself of chains by some trick, he ordered that I be shackled hand and foot.

The party passed through Orel. The city had two prisons: the State Prison and the Central Penitentiary. The latter was one of the two darkest spots in Russia's prison network (the other being the Ekaterinoslav Castle). Its inmates were subjected to merciless beating and mistreatment. Many had been beaten to death, and several—Sapotnitsky, among others—had committed suicide.

When the train was approaching Orel, the convoy began to check the lists of prisoners, singling out those who were to be transferred from the railroad station directly to the penitentiary. One of the men in my compartment, a young man with dark hair and a pale face, was to be delivered to that grim place. A soldier stepped into